

Canada Oil and Gas Act

Therefore, Mr. Speaker, as the Minister of Energy, Mines and Resources (Mr. Lalonde) has already pointed out, this 25 per cent provision is simply one way of getting back for the Canadian taxpayer a fair share of what he or she has contributed over the years for exploration in these areas of Canada. In many cases this has amounted to 93 per cent, 95 per cent and sometimes 103 per cent of the cost of that exploration.

The National Energy Program is designed to free us from dependence on OPEC, leading ultimately to independence in terms of imported oil, and hence energy self-sufficiency. Second, the National Energy Program offers Canadians the opportunity to participate in the energy industry in general, expanding the role of public sector companies and encouraging the growth of Canadian companies to allow all of us to share in the benefits of energy industry expansion.

The National Energy Program also establishes a petroleum and revenue sharing system that stresses the need for fairness to all Canadians no matter where they live in Canada. The government has moved very decisively toward implementing the National Energy Program. Its aim is to encourage the discovery and production of Canadian oil and gas, and to protect the consumer and the economy by having a gradual increase in prices that is less than the Conservative proposals, and that does not exacerbate inflation as would the Crosbie budget's rapid progression toward world prices. The pricing structure, along with the numerous incentives, also provides the economic climate necessary for the development of our resources of natural gas, oil, and alternate energy resources.

In many ways this debate has followed a predictable course. On one side the NDP is saying to the government, "You are not doing enough, we need more government intervention, nationalize the industry." The position the NDP has taken on this question and on many others would leave our economy and deficit in such bad shape there is no way we would be able to support the social programs for which the NDP is so fond of trying to take credit. As you know, Mr. Speaker, the vast majority of our social programs have been put through by Liberal governments.

This brings me to another point, the posturing of the Conservative party with regard to their rhetoric of concern for the little guy. If they were so concerned about the little guy, then why did the Conservative party, exactly one year ago last Thursday, introduce a budget that would have cost consumers \$40 billion more than the Liberal budget and energy policy? They talk about their energy tax credit, but the Liberal energy program saves the consumers 12 times more than the amount provided by their energy tax credit.

In light of that budget of one year ago, which most of the Conservative members here voted for, how can these same individuals, and particularly the hon. member for Rosedale (Mr. Crombie), now be talking in a self-righteous manner about protecting the little guy? Furthermore, when one looks at the facts, it has been Liberal governments which have acted for the little guy. It has been Liberal governments that have introduced old age security, the guaranteed income supple-

ment, the Canada Pension Plan, family allowances, medicare, and many other programs.

The Conservatives do a lot of talking, but where was there any social concern in their budget of last year for the little guy, and where is their track record of social legislation? Where was there a GIS in the Crosbie budget? It is a very sad track record indeed. I would suggest to the hon. member for Rosedale that he is living in a glass house and throwing stones made up of inaccurate information. This government, the Liberal government, fulfils its social responsibilities in balance with an economically realistic budget and National Energy Program.

Much of what has been said by the Tories concerning the industries' reaction to the Canada lands initiatives and many other aspects of the National Energy Program is, to say the least, exaggerated. They have, for instance, chosen to highlight instances of drilling rigs leaving the country, and have said that this has resulted in a slowdown in the industry. The facts are quite the contrary.

Before the National Energy Program was announced, the president of the Canadian Association of Oilwell Drilling Contractors, Mr. Selby Porter, was quoted in the *Globe and Mail* as saying that the use of drilling rigs in Canada was expected to drop to 59 per cent of available capacity over the next 15 months. The reason he gave was that the equipment market was oversupplied. The reason they are oversupplied is because we have a surplus of gas, with capped wells, and no immediate incentives for drilling. This was before the budget. With the National Energy Program and the budget, we have a gas bank and this problem has been taken care of. With 572 rigs in western Canada, and 475 operative, our rig deployment rate is 83 per cent. Five years ago the deployment rate was 48 per cent. Interestingly, Mr. Porter also added that the long-term outlook for the industry was optimistic, and that the demand for services would continue to grow. So, as you can see, there is very little actual substance to the Tory arguments.

Generally speaking, when the government brought down the National Energy Program we did not expect industry to be overjoyed, since we have increased the national government's share of revenue largely at their expense. What we did expect from the industry was a realistic appraisal of the situation, and this is what is currently transpiring. It does not take a financial wizard to understand that there is money to be made in oil and gas in this country, and slowly but surely the industry is coming to realize that the federal government has a national responsibility for our energy and economic future, and that this responsibility requires a greater slice of the revenue pie.

An hon. Member: Want to bet?

Mr. Lang: Somebody says, "Want to bet?" The hon. member for Etobicoke Centre (Mr. Wilson), the Conservative energy critic, was expounding in the House the other day on how this government is the national government and has the national responsibility for energy development. I suggest members opposite get their lines of communication straightened out so we know where they stand on the energy issue.